

## **Justin Mortimer „Häftling“**

**April 2 – May 7, 2011**

Mihai Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles is pleased to announce “Häftling”, the first solo show in the US of British artist Justin Mortimer.

Justin Mortimer’s series of paintings for this exhibition raises fundamental questions about human nature and the extremes we are capable of. The imagery is shocking and disturbing, the subjects depicted are victims of war and oppression, but the painterly language is sublime. Mortimer’s new works represent a gap between conflict and the restoration of order during which any kinds of barbaric act might be committed.

Both thematic and aesthetic connections can be drawn between Justin Mortimer’s paintings and works produced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century France, the violence portrayed can be found in almost any period of history. Today the images of conflict we see come from mobile phones, digital photos and news websites - sources that Mortimer himself uses as part of his research for making the paintings. Conflict, violence, barbarism and the capacity to inflict suffering on others seems to be inextricably interwoven with the human condition and despite the progress civilization has made, it appears that history keeps repeating itself.

Mortimer’s paintings must rank as some of the most distressing images to enter the machinery of contemporary art in recent years and are some of the most significant and accomplished paintings dealing with contemporary conflicts around the world.